Speech by H.E Mr Rajkeswur Purryag, GCSK, GOSK on the occasion of the launching of “Bhagavad Gita- Message of Heroism” written by Mr. Babooram Mahadoo, on Friday 14 March 2014, at 14:30 hrs at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Moka

The Hon. Anil Kumar Bachoo, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping

Dr The Hon. Vasant Kumar Bunwaree, Minister of Education and Human Resources

Mr Yvan Martial, Director Yvan Martial Publications Ltéé

Mr. Ravin Dwarka, Chairman, MGI/RTI Council

Mr Bijaye Madhou, Director-General, MGI/RTI

Mr Pahlad Ramsurrun, President, Indradhanush Sanskritic Parishad

Mr Babooram Mahadoo and Members of the Mahadoo Family

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to thank the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Indradhanush Sanskritic Parishad for associating me with the launching of this book, “Bhagavad Gita – Message of Heroism” authored by our good friend, Mr. Babooram Mahadoo.

I have known Mr. Mahadoo as a politician, Minister and diplomat.

I never realized that he was also a gifted and prolific writer until I read his book.
I would therefore like to congratulate Mr. Mahadoo who is at his second publication.

I understand he is now working on a compilation of all his press articles, speeches and messages.

He is also planning to launch a book on “The History of Vinayak Mandir”.

I wish him good luck and plenty of success in his future endeavours.

Writing a book demands a lot of effort, energy, research and above all, resources, both financial and physical.

It is also an extreme privilege and a gift.

That’s why I always make it a point to encourage our compatriots who have a taste for writing to do so.

In the words of John Milton: “A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life and beyond life”.

“Books are not absolutely dead things but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are.”

Be that as it may, I am sure Mr. Babooram Mahadoo has his own reasons for having dedicated so much of his time and energy in writing “Bhagavad Gita – Message of Heroism”.

He has demonstrated a lot of skills and talent in writing on a subject that is so vast and deep.

His book is also couched in a simple and easily understandable language that should appeal to all the readers.

The publication of “Bhagavad Gita – Message of Heroism” has come at an opportune time.

First, because the habit and culture of reading is regaining lost ground, and second, the need for a revival of our religious and spiritual values has become more than ever an imperative.

The Gita epitomizes the peak of Aryan wisdom and human and spiritual values and culture.

The central tenet of vedic culture propounded by Lord Kirshna in the Bhagavad Gita is spiritual reality and the universal principles of life.

As we all know, vedic culture has been continuously influencing our life.

During all times of trials and tribulation that we have passed through, this culture has always guided and inspired us.

This reminds us of our fore-fathers who came from India and while they were going through the most difficult times of their life, they found in the Ramayana, the courage and spirit to faced daunting challenges.
But these days, if we pause a little and ask ourselves why are we going through such dark times, we will find that man has lost his spiritual bearings and values, and his sense of purpose.

We are bereft of the essential values of life and have plunged in a dark era of our history.

Values fundamental to healthy living, peace and harmony in our society seem to be gradually eroding.

Materialism has now overshadowed spiritualism.

Many people are more interested in acquiring wealth than inner peace and eternal happiness.

Violence of all kinds and atrocities never heard of before are making the headlines.

We can avert this tragedy by resurrecting those values.

Our scriptures, be they, the Gita, the Koran or the Bible provide us with a source of comfort and inspiration to face the tribulations of life.

As Mr. Babooram Mahadoo so ably puts it at the beginning of his Preface and I quote:

“The Bhagavad Gita is a treatise whose universal message is valid for all times and all human beings irrespective of their race”
We all know that the Gita is a universal scripture, a treasure house of knowledge, a guide to humanity.

It deals with every aspect of human development in society.

In fact, it teaches humanity the way of life.

It acts as a guide to human beings in all aspects of life, including a healthy and wholesome mind that has a universal value.

The Gita is also a mandate of action, righteous action.

The classic advice given by Krishna to Arjuna is to act according to his dharma, which conveys the multiple meanings of righteous action.

Righteous action means what a man ought to do, not merely as a social being but also as an individual with a spiritual destiny.

It is written in the Upanishad and I quote:  
“You are what your deepest nature is.  
As your nature, so is your soul.  
As your deed is, so is your destiny”. (Unquote)

For those of you who have read the “Bhagavad Gita”, you would know that the scene at the battlefield of Kurukshetra represents nothing more than the battlefield within us, in our mind, where forces of good and evil are in eternal strife.
Unfortunately, many people just take a surface view of the battle of Mahabharata without associating themselves with its teachings.

The Mahabharata is in fact the battle of life, and teaches us fundamental values that should guide us in our daily life.

The values of life have to be clearly defined, learned and imbibed by one and all.

Because they help us keep peace and harmony within ourselves and in society at large.

It helps us to introspect and develop our inner-self because everything is found inside us – the body – the mind, and the intellect -

an intellect which has the ability to think freely, logically and the faculty to reason and judge without bias.

Once we develop a strong intellect, our thinking becomes clear, reasoning precise, and judgment perfect.

And it is essential for us as human beings to imbibe the right values of life.

Indeed, this is the essence of the Bhagavad Gita.

The way the world is evolving shows that ignorance has taken the upper hand on wisdom and the search for true knowledge.

But the question is who makes us ignorant?

We ourselves.
We put our hands over our eyes and lament that it is darkness.

As Swami Vivekananda has said: (Quote)

"None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul" (Unquote)

The Bhagavad Gita teaches us exactly this, i.e tolerance and forgiveness freedom from doubt and delusion, truthfulness and control of the senses and the Nishkarma.

The Gita is meant to give us strength, to serve people and to serve ourselves.

It tells us how to discharge our duties as the head of the family, a member of the society and at the same time, it makes us realize the spiritual destiny of mankind.

The Gita is a book that one can study and cherish to follow its precepts throughout life.

We should always turn to the Gita when we are in a bad and complex situation.

The art of life according to the Gita is “How to live, What to do and What not to do’, for example, control the senses, consume the right food, recite the mantras, perform the yajna, protect the environment, care for the afflicted people, and live harmoniously in society.

Going back to the Bhagavad Gita remains one of the paths if not the ideal path to salvation.
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Mahadoo also pays tribute to Swami Harihar Maharaj Saraswati, whom he considers as his Guru and who inspired him to “write on the Bhagavad Gita and disseminate his teachings”.

There is nothing more appropriate than what Swamiji said.

So many books have been written on the Bhagavad Gita.

Translations of the Bhagavad Gita exist in dozens of languages. Millions of copies of different interpretations of the philosophy underlining the Gita are also in circulation.

Mr. Mahadoo’s book is yet another writing that will add to the taste of all lovers of religion and spirituality and vedic knowledge.

Let me conclude with the following epitaph:

“Oh! Ye souls of the Vedic age, your lives on earth
do surely all remind us
We can make our lives sublime
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.”

With these words, I wish to thank the MGI and the Indradhanush Sanskritic Parishad again for having invited me to this function and I strongly commend “Bhagavad Gita – Message of Heroism” to all our readers, here and elsewhere.

I thank you for your attention.